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United Nations Relief and Works Agency
for Palestine Refugees in the Near East

Offers by Member States of grants and scholarships for higher education, including vocational training, for Palestine refugees

Report of the Secretary-General

1. The present report is submitted to the General Assembly in pursuance of its resolution 51/127 of 13 December 1996.

2. The report includes the substance of responses from States, specialized agencies and other organizations to the appeal contained in that resolution, together with reference to further action taken by States and specialized agencies in response to the appeal contained in General Assembly resolutions 32/90 F of 13 December 1977, 33/112 C of 18 December 1978, 34/52 C of 23 November 1979, 35/13 B of 3 November 1980, 36/146 H of 16 December 1981, 37/120 D of 16 December 1982, 38/83 D of 15 December 1983, 39/99 D of 14 December 1984, 40/165 D of 16 December 1985, 41/69 D of 3 December 1986, 42/69 D of 2 December 1987, 43/57 D of 6 December 1988, 44/47 D of 8 December 1989, 45/73 D of 11 December 1990, 46/46 D of 9 December 1991, 47/69 D of 14 December 1992, 48/40 D of 10 December 1993, 49/35 D of 9 December 1994 and 50/128 D of 6 December 1995. In those resolutions the Assembly appealed to all States, specialized agencies and non-governmental organizations to augment the special allocations for grants and scholarships to Palestine refugees; invited the relevant specialized agencies and other organizations of the United Nations system to continue, within their respective spheres of competence, to extend assistance for higher education to Palestine refugee students; and requested the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) to act as the recipient and trustee for such special allocations for grants and scholarships and to award them to qualified refugee candidates.

3. In 1996/97, the Government of Japan awarded 10 fellowships through UNRWA, of which 3 were to Palestine refugees who are employed by UNRWA as vocational training staff at the eight vocational training centres in the UNRWA area of operations, 1 was a fellowship in Vocational Training Administration and 6 were fellowships in community health. Applications for nominees for these fellowships for training in Japan are processed by the Japan International Cooperation Agency. A review of this programme since its inception, in 1985, until 1997, shows that the Government of Japan has offered a total of 144 fellowships, of which 133 have been processed. In 1989, the Government of Japan contributed $1 million to be spent over a five-year period, towards the UNRWA university scholarship programme for secondary school graduates. The recipients are Palestine refugee students from the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Between 1993 and 1996 127 scholars graduated from this programme in a wide spectrum of specializations. In 1996, 35 students were still pursuing their

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studies. The interest accruing to this contribution was used to grant additional scholarships to 14 Palestine refugee students in 1996/97. The Government of Japan contributed an additional $400,000, in each of the years 1992, 1993 and 1994, $500,000 in 1995 and $600,000 in 1996; each amount was to be spent over a five-year period for Palestine refugee students in the UNRWA university scholarships programme for secondary school graduates from the UNRWA area of operations. A total of 423 recipients participated in the programme in 1996/97 while 19 scholars graduated in 1995 and 1996. These awards, while not specifically in response to the General Assembly resolutions, are in keeping with their spirit.

4. The Government of Switzerland contributed $1,463,581 between 1989 and 1995 and $240,000 in 1996 to the UNRWA university scholarships programme for secondary school graduates. Some 101 scholars graduated between 1993 and 1996 while 240 students from the UNRWA area of operations were still pursuing their university studies in 1996/97. In 1997, the Government of Switzerland contributed an additional $338,000, which will allow for about 60 new beneficiaries in 1997/98.

5. During the biennium 1996-1997, as part of its long-standing agreement with UNRWA, and within the framework of the regular programme regarding scholarships for Palestinian people, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization granted 71 scholarships in favour of Palestinian students. In addition, Japan offered three fellowships and Saudi Arabia offered five, while the inter-university Palestinian European Academic Cooperation in Education programme renewed its six ongoing scholarships and added seven new ones to the programme. The International Institute for Educational Planning received eight Palestinian candidates (full or part time) for the training programme.

6. Since 1994, all fellowship applications to the World Health Organization (WHO) have been nominated by the Palestinian Authority. In 1996/97, WHO provided and processed a total of 32 fellowships/study tours for qualified Palestinian candidates in various specializations, with a commutative total of 54 months study. WHO is examining requests for an additional 45 fellowships/study tours submitted by the Palestinian authority.

7. The United World Colleges has now established its own selection committee in the area and therefore did not offer any scholarships through UNRWA for 1997/98.